

Cultural & Historic Resources



Preserving our historic past is important for the future of south San Antonio. We have a lot of historic buildings out here. We need to make sure they are saved.

Rural Open space Slow pace Pioneer attitude Low density Water & natural resources Rivas Family values Multi-generational Cultural diversity Community Returning professionals Perez Historic Pride Independence Self-sufficient Unregulated Urban and county culture De la Garza Lack of regulation Growth concerns Great potential Apprehensive Losoya Greenbelts connecting rivers and creeks Preserve agriculture Town centers with mixed use Martinez East-west connections Texas A&M University campus Concentrated industrial uses Ruiz Commercial nodes Public transportation connections Diverse housing Montes de Oca Rural Open space Slow pace Pioneer attitude Low density Water & natural resources Rivas Family values Multi-generational Cultural diversity Community Returning professionals Perez Historic Pride Independence Self-sufficient Unregulated Urban and county culture De la Garza Lack of regulation Growth concerns Great potential Apprehensive Losoya Greenbelts connecting rivers and creeks Preserve agriculture Town centers with mixed use Martinez East-west connections Texas A&M University campus Rural Open space Slow pace Pioneer attitude Low density Water & natural resources Rivas Family values Multi-generational Cultural diversity Community Returning professionals Perez Historic Pride Independence Self-sufficient Unregulated Urban and county culture De la Garza Lack of regulation Growth concerns Great potential Apprehensive Losoya Greenbelts connecting rivers and creeks Preserve agriculture Town centers with mixed use Martinez East-west connections Texas A&M University campus Concentrated industrial uses Ruiz Commercial nodes Public transportation connections Diverse housing Montes de Oca Rural Open space Slow pace Pioneer attitude Low density Water & natural resources Rivas Family values Multi-generational Cultural diversity Community Returning professionals Perez Historic Pride Independence Self-sufficient Unregulated Urban and county culture De la Garza Lack of regulation Growth concerns Great potential Apprehensive Losoya Greenbelts connecting rivers and creeks Preserve agriculture Town centers with mixed use Martinez East-west connections Texas A&M University campus Concentrated industrial uses Ruiz Commercial nodes Public transportation connections Diverse housing Montes de Oca Rural Open space Slow pace Pioneer attitude Low density Water & natural resources Rivas Family values Multi-generational Cultural diversity Community Returning professionals Perez Historic Pride Independence Self-sufficient Unregulated Urban and county culture De la

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The cultural and historical character of an area helps define the community over a period of time. These characteristics give an area a unique identity, setting it apart from any other place. It is defined by events, peoples and features of the built environment. The area is rich in history, from both the pre-historic and historic periods.

Key Community Issues
Preservation of historic sites
Preserve areas around the Toyota site
Respect for cultural diversity and pride

GOALS and OBJECTIVES

Preserve and protect the historic resources of the Southside Initiative planning area

- Identify and designate historic districts and historic landmarks
 - Perform a historic structures survey
 - Identify potential historic districts and historic landmarks from the survey information
 - Designate historic districts and historic landmarks
 - Provide education and design assistance to owners of designated properties
 - Provide information on newly designated historic districts and historic landmarks to the public on the Planning Department's website
- Designate a new River Improvement Overlay (RIO) District to protect the unique environment of the San Antonio River
 - Perform a San Antonio River survey of the section of the river in the planning area
 - Identify defining characteristics
 - Develop design standards and guidelines to protect and enhance the area's defining characteristics
 - Designate a new RIO district in the planning area
 - Provide education and design assistance for owners of designated properties

Promote Heritage Tourism

- Link all historic sites through open space
 - Perform an analysis of open space as it relates to historic sites
 - Examine linkages between historic sites and open space
 - Publish document promoting linkages between historic sites and open space
 - Organize publicity events (i.e., home tours), for historic properties



A number of historic preservation issues have been raised during the City South Community Plan development process, including the preservation of buildings and structures. Participants in the plan development process have identified farm buildings, bridges, and cemeteries as requiring historic preservation protection. The participants also noted that a survey of the area should be completed to determine how many historic sites exist in the planning area.



Prehistoric Period

Evidence of human occupation in the study area goes back almost 9,000 years. The Native Americans of that time, which is known as the Paledoneon Period (11,200-7950 BP – before present), lived in highly mobile groups and followed big game such as mammoths and giant bison although they probably made a substantial part of their living from hunting smaller prey and gathering plant foods (McKinney 1999). This period was followed by the Archaic stage where the groups were still mobile, but increasingly narrower in their range. Formal cemeteries appear in the late Archaic Period (2350-1250 BP). Increased trade occurred in this period, as well as a decrease in the size of projectile points. The arrival of the bow and arrow signaled the beginning of the Late Prehistoric period somewhere around 1300 BP. During this period pottery also arrived in the area.

Numerous archeological sites have been documented within the study area, due in large part to the intensive surveys conducted during the Applewhite Reservoir project in 1981 and 1984 (McGraw and Hinds 1987). Additional surveys have been conducted in the 1990s.

Historic Period

The Historic Period begins in this area near the end of the seventeenth century with the arrival of Europeans and their written journals. At least five indigenous aboriginal linguistic stocks were represented among the Indian groups in the area at the time of European contact, the most common of which appear to have been the Coahuilteco stock including bands of Payaya, Pampopa, Pastia and

Sulujam. These and other groups were drawn into the San Antonio mission establishments beginning in 1718. Mission Espada, the southernmost of the five San Antonio missions, is located in the planning area. It was established in 1731, the present church was completed in 1756, and was active until secularization in 1793-94. Today Mission Espada is part of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, an 819

acre park facility, established in 1978 that preserves four of the 1700s Spanish frontier missions.

During Spanish Colonial times and later the area was a center of ranching and agriculture. Spanish land grants were given to a number of ranching families in the area; José Sandoval (1824) Juan Urriegas, Domingo Bustillos, Juan Montes de Oca, Dionisio Martínez (1834), Ignacio Pérez, Domingo Losoya (1834),

Manuel De Luna (1834) D. Casanova, Francisco Farias (1835), and Pablo Villapando, to name a few. One of the largest was the José A. de la Garza grant.

Geronimo de la Garza arrived in the San Antonio area with the Domingo Ramon expedition in

1716. (Chabot 1937:78).

By 1840, his grandson, José Antonio, had acquired a vast amount of property. The De la Garza lands included two large tracks on either side of the San Antonio River within the planning area. A two-story stone

house was built on the property in the mid-nineteenth century. No earlier structures were recorded. They may not have built permanent structures on the grants until the threat of frequent Indian raids had passed.

Historic Roads & Bridges

El Camino Real, also known as the Lower Presidio Road and the Old San Antonio Road is in the vicinity of Old Pleasanton Road in the planning area. A significant historic resource in the area, plans are currently underway to designate El Camino Real de los Tejas as a National Historic Trail. Upon designation, technical assistance to interpret and market this historic Spanish Colonial road as a heritage tourism resource would be available to owners of property that the trail traverses.



Other historic roads in the area are the Upper Laredo Road near Somerset Road; El Camino de Palo Alto or El Camino de Agua Negra (circa 1848-1860) near State Highway 16; and the Old San Antonio-Laredo Road (circa 1755-1860) near Old Pleasanton Road.

Crossing points on the lower Medina River played an important part in the Spanish exploration of Texas and many *entradas* passed through the area. The expedition of the newly appointed governor of the province of Texas, Martin de Alarcon, crossed the Median River in April 1718, either at Mann's Crossing at present day Pearsall Road or at Garza's Crossing at present day Somerset Road. (Fox, 1975)



Historic Sites

Sites along the Medina River have historical significance. Located on FM 1937 at Losoya is a centennial marker commemorating the Battle of Medina. On August 18, 1813, the Republican Army of the North, fighting to uphold the declared independence of Mexico from Spain, met defeat in the battle of Medina at the river southeast of San Antonio de B́exar. Hundreds of rebel troops were killed by forces under Spanish General Joaquín de Arredondo. Other possible historic designation sites in the planning area include the Battle of Medina's initial engagement at the Medina River near Applewhite and Pleasanton Roads. New information locates the main engagement near Pleasanton Road at Gallinas Creek, near the Bexar-Atascosa county line, south of the planning area. Such sites may merit historical designation.

Historic Cemeteries

A number of historic cemeteries are located in the study area including the Ruiz/Herrera Cemetery, the Mitchell/Mauermann Cemetery, the El Carmen Catholic Cemetery and the Jett/Yoakum Cemetery.

Several early leaders of San Antonio are buried in the study area, among them are José Ruiz, Blas Herrera, Asa Mitchell, and John Wesley DeVilbiss. José Ruiz was born in San Antonio on January 29, 1783. He was one of the four representatives of Bexar County at the convention in 1836 at Washington on the Brazos. A signer of the Declaration of Independence, he represented Bexar County in the Senate of the first Congress. Francisco Ruiz, his son, was the acting Mayor of San Antonio in 1836. He is buried in the Ruiz-Herrera cemetery, established in the 1840s, located on Somerset Road.

Blas Herrera, who alerted the Alamo defenders to Santa Anna's approach, is also buried in the Ruiz-Herrera Cemetery. After his military services during the revolution, Herrera worked as a farmer and rancher and was active in the civic affairs of his community. On February 3, 1828, he married María Antonio Ruiz (1809-87), daughter of Col. José Francisco Ruiz, with whom he had ten children. The Herreras lived on family land in the vicinity of the Old San Antonio Road crossing of the Medina River at Paso de las Garzas in south Bexar County, near the present day town of Somerset, Texas.



Asa Mitchell was one of Stephen F. Austin's "Old 300" who came to Texas in 1822. He was an early advocate of Texas independence, helping draw up the Declaration of Independence and fighting in the battle of San Jacinto. Mitchell acquired extensive ranch property near San Antonio in 1839 and moved to Bexar county in 1840. He engaged successfully in merchan-

dizing, interested himself in local political affairs, and sometimes substituted in the Methodist pulpit as a lay preacher. During the Civil War he directed the controversial activities of the San Antonio Vigilance Committee which partially superceded the indifferent law enforcement agencies of the period. Mitchell died in San Antonio on November 6, 1865

and was buried in the family plot near the ranch home he built in the early 1840s. Mitchell County is named for him.

John Wesley DeVilbiss was a Methodist minister who came to San Antonio in 1846 and along with John McCullough, a Presbyterian minister, held the first protestant services in San Antonio.

Historic Buildings

In addition to the De la Garza house previously mentioned, other historic houses and structures exist in the planning area. A few are listed below.

Occupied by the same family since 1754, the Pérez-Linn-Walsh family historic site includes a stone house and wooden-frame outbuildings. It is located off Applewhite Road between Leon Creek and the Medina River. A chapel within the stone structure apparently contains artifacts from the Spanish Colonial period. Pérez, who was a Royalist and a lieutenant in the Spanish

army, accumulated vast land holdings and practiced stock raising. In 1808, Pérez received four leagues of land just below the Medina River and astride the Old San Antonio Road and an adjoining league between the Medina and Leon Creek that served as the base for his livestock operations.

There are two Watson houses in the planning area, one north of Watson Road and the other on the south side. The house on the south side is 1910- 1920 vintage and was built by Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Watson shortly after they were married.

The Enoch Jones Farmstead is lo-

cated on land purchased as part of an 1808 Spanish colonial land grant to Ignacio Pérez. An Ohio native, Enoch Jones moved to Texas in 1846 and began construction of the farmstead buildings in 1856 with stone quarried on the site. A large house, barn and outbuildings were erected. After Jones' death, the property was sold to Count Norbert Von Ormay. The Von Ormay's intended to establish a royal court in the house but sold the property within two years. After a series of owners, T.B. Baker bought the land in 1915. The Baker family held the property until 1994.

Table 3 - Historic Sites Map Legend (see page 25)

Map #	Historic Site Type	Historic Name Association
2	Rural Residential/Ranching Complex	Presnall-Watson/Applegate
5	Historic River Crossing	Dolores-Pérez-Applewhite
6	Family Cemetery	Ruiz-Herrera
7	Family Cemetery	Enrique Esparza
8	Rural Residential/Ranching Complex	Enoch Jones
9	Rural Residential/Ranching Complex	Applewhite-Mullens
14	Historic River Crossing	Talon-Palo Alto
15	Historic River Crossing	Paso de las Garzas
16	Rural Residential/Ranching Complex	Pérez
17	Chapel and Cemetery Complex	Pérez
18	Battle Site	Medina
19	Church/Cemetery Complex	Unknown
24	Historic Gravesite	Unknown
27	Historic Ruins	Unknown
28	Historic Ruins	Enoch Jones
30	Historic Ruins	Unknown
31	Historic Cemetery	Jett-Yoakum
32	Historic Ruins	Yoakum
33	Historic River Crossing	Sabinitas/Jett Crossing
35	Historic Residential Structure	Monk House
36	Historic Kiln	Walsh Brick Kiln
37	Historic Ruins	Unknown
38	Historic Cemetery	Unknown
39	Historic Residential Structures	Unknown
42	Historic Residential Structures	Watson Houses
43	Historic Cemetery	Mitchell/Mauermann
44	Historic Cemetery and Chapel	El Carmen Catholic Cemetery
45	Rural Residential/Ranching Complex	BMWD Ranch House
46	Historic House	Walsh
47	Historic Ranch Complex	Pérez, Walsh
48	Historic House and Barn	Herman
49	Historic Crossing	Losoya Crossing
50	Mission	Mission San Francisco de la Espada
51	Historic Crossing	Kerr Crossing
52-57	Historic Cemeteries	various



Early Development

The Southside's residential settlement pattern has its origins in the 18th century Spanish *ranchos* of the San Antonio River Valley. This was followed by the development of several 19th and 20th century communities that served as local commercial and social centers. Named for the original grant holder, Losoya was first settled after the Civil War and today is home to about 300 inhabitants; another community, Buena Vista, was settled around 1900. In the mid 1930s, it supported a school, a store and a number of homes. The school operated until the early 1950s when it was consolidated with the Southside Independent School District. The town of Earle was originally located on the San Antonio, Uvalde and Gulf Railroad, twelve miles south of downtown San Antonio in southern Bexar County. A post

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Future/Proposed Development

Unique and important historical buildings and sites located in the planning area should be protected and preserved. These irreplaceable resources will be endangered by unregulated development, traffic, deterioration and vandalism. It is important to identify the unique cultural and historic sites in the area and designate these as landmarks, historic districts, cemeteries, and archeological sites to protect the unique heritage of the area. By setting aside historically valuable buildings, landmarks and areas by specific historic designation, the city actively participates in the preservation of cultural and

office operated at the site from 1887 to 1904. In 1890, Earle had a blacksmith, a general store, a butcher, and a doctor.

Other communities in the planning area include Cassin and Southton. Cassin, an early 1900s stop on the San Antonio, Uvalde, and Gulf Railroad, currently has a population of 50 persons. In the early 1900s, Southton was a townsite on the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railway. The station was the shipping point for the Ytur-

ria-Southton oilfield; the community was the site of Bexar County Farms, San Antonio Cotton Mills and the Bexar County Boys Home. Today, the community has approximately 100 residents.

Today's residential patterns in the planning area are varied. The area is characterized by clusters of manufactured housing, small "ranchette" subdivisions, suburban subdivisions, and homes situated on farms and ranches.



neighborhood identity.

Development along the San Antonio River is protected by the River Improvement Overlay District (RIO). The purpose of this district is to establish regulations to protect, preserve and enhance the San Antonio River and its improvements by establishing design standards and guidelines for properties located near the river. The San Antonio River is a unique and precious natural, cultural and historic resource that provides a physical connection through San Antonio by linking a variety of neighborhoods, cultural sites, public parks and destina-

tions. The RIO should be extended south to protect the unique character of the San Antonio River in the study area. A River Improvement Overlay should also be considered for the Medina River.

